



United States Department of Agriculture

CHARTER

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS

1. Committee's Official Designation

This Charter renews the Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (the "Committee").

2. Authority

The Committee is authorized pursuant to Section 5(b) of the Agricultural Credit Improvement Act of 1992, U.S.C. 1929 note, and is managed in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. App. 2. Committee oversight and authority was transferred from the Farm Service Agency to the Office of Advocacy and Outreach through the 2008 Farm Bill.

3. Objectives and Scope of Activities

The Committee's purpose is to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on strategies, policies, and programs that enhance opportunities for new farmers and ranchers. The Committee, through representation and expertise, will advance and prioritize new recommendations and retool and expand upon Committee advice submitted during the prior term.

4. Description of Duties

The Committee shall advise the Secretary of Agriculture on matters broadly affecting new farmers and ranchers. The Committee shall also consider Department goals and objectives necessary to implement prior recommendations and develop and recommend a framework and overall strategy that will encompass the following:

- Principles to leverage and maximize existing programs to assist beginning farmers and ranchers;
- Methods and strategies to amplify and improve State collaboration and participation in programs;

- Opportunity creation strategies and pilot programs (e.g., farm apprenticeships, farm incubators) to develop new farming and ranching operations;
- Ideas to provide relief from labor and taxation challenges.

5. Agency or Official to Whom the Committee Reports

The Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers reports to the Secretary of Agriculture.

6. Support

The Office of Advocacy and Outreach will provide support to the Committee and to the Designated Federal Official (DFO) in the conduct of the official duties of the Committee.

7. Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years

The annual fiscal year cost for Committee operations is estimated to be \$80,000 plus the equivalent of .33 FTE which is approximately \$30,000.

8. Designated Federal Officer

As a full-time or permanent part-time employee, appointed in accordance with Agency procedures, the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) will attend all of the Committee's meetings, prepare or cause to be prepared agendas, attend all Committee meetings, adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest, and collaboratively chair meetings with the Committee chairperson, or chair meetings when directed to do so by the official to whom the Committee reports.

9. Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings

The Committee will meet up to 6 times per year depending on the need and at the discretion of the Department. The Committee may meet face-to-face for up to two times annually as operating costs allow. Other meetings may be held via Web interface or teleconferences as required.

10. Duration

The Committee's existence is continuing pursuant to statute. The Committee charter shall be in effect for 2 years. The charter may be renewed in accordance with Section 14 of FACA (5 U.S.C. App. 2 § 14).

11. Termination

Unless renewed by appropriate action prior to its expiration, the Committee will terminate December 30, 2014.

12. Membership and Designation

The Committee shall consist of up to 20 members. The Secretary appoints members based upon self-nominations or nominations submitted by others. All members will have the requisite experience in agriculture that enables them to participate fully in the work of the Committee. Among the membership of the Committee, there shall be representatives from the following:

- a) The Farm Service Agency;
- b) State beginning farming programs;
- c) Commercial lenders;
- d) Private nonprofit organizations with active beginning farmer or rancher programs;
- e) The National Institute of Food and Agriculture;
- f) Community colleges or other educational institutions with demonstrated experience in training beginning farmers or ranchers; and;
- g) Other entities, or persons providing lending or technical assistance for qualified beginning farmers or ranchers.

All members of the Committee may be designated as representatives or Special Government Employees under FACA rules. Regular Government Employees may also be appointed pursuant to the statute that outlines this Committee's composition. All members shall serve on a voluntary basis and without compensation. Members shall be entitled to receive reimbursement for travel expenses and per diem related to attending Committee meetings in accordance with Standard Government Travel Regulations. Other aspects of Committee membership and designation are as follows:

- a. This Committee will be fairly balanced in its membership in terms of the points of view represented and the functions to be performed. Steps will be taken to encourage divergent points of view including establishing staggered membership terms and limiting the number of renewed memberships. The Committee shall consist of no more than twenty people appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture.
- b. USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach shall select a Chairperson and Vice Chair upon consultation with the members of the Committee. The

chairperson should be an individual recognized for their ability to lead a group in a fair and focused manner and who has been briefed on the mission of this Committee. A co-chairperson may be assigned to facilitate chairperson succession.

- c. Equal Employment Opportunity practices in accordance with USDA policies will be followed in all appointments to the Committee. To ensure that the recommendations of the Committee have taken into account the needs of the diverse groups served by USDA, membership will include to the extent possible, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.
- d. The USDA prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.
- e. To maintain the highest levels of honesty, integrity and ethical conduct, no Committee or subcommittee member shall participate in any "specific party matters". For example, matters which are narrowly focused and typically involve specific transactions between identified parties; such as a lease, license, permit, contract, claim, grant, agreement, or related litigation with the Department in which the member has a direct or indirect financial interest. This includes the requirement for Committee or Subcommittee members to immediately disclose to the DFO (for discussion with USDA's Office of Ethics) any specific party matter in which the member's immediate family, relatives, business partners or employer would be directly seeking to financially benefit from the Committee's recommendations. Members of the Committee shall be required to disclose their direct or indirect interest in leases, licenses, permits, contracts, or claims that involve lands or resources administered by the USDA or in any litigation related thereto.

All members will receive ethics training to identify and avoid any actions that would cause the public to question the integrity of the Committee's advice and recommendations. Members who are appointed as "Representatives" are not subject to Federal ethics laws because such appointment allows them to represent the point(s) of view of a particular group, business sector, or segment of the public.

Members appointed as "Special Government Employees" (SGEs) are considered to be intermittent Federal employees and are thus subject to Federal ethics laws. SGE's are appointed due to their personal knowledge, academic scholarship, background, or expertise. No SGE may participate in any activity in which the member has a prohibited financial interest. Appointees who are SGEs are required to complete and submit a Confidential Financial Disclosure Report (OGE-450 form) and, upon request, USDA will assist SGEs in preparing these financial reports. To ensure the highest level of compliance with applicable ethical standards USDA will provide ethics training to SGEs on an annual basis. The provisions of these paragraphs are not meant to exhaustively cover all Federal ethics laws and do not affect any other statutory or regulatory obligations to which advisory committee members are subject.

13. Subcommittees

The USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach has the authority to create subcommittees and may form subcommittees for purposes consistent with this charter. All subcommittees must report back to the parent committee and may not provide advice or work products directly to the Agency.

14. Recordkeeping

The records of this Committee, formally and informally established subcommittees, or other subgroups of the committee, shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 26, Item 2 or other approved agency records disposition schedule. These records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.

15. Filing Date

This charter will be filed with the Library of Congress and Congressional oversight Committees, and the Secretariat of GSA as required by FACA. The filing date shall be the day the charter is filed with Congress.